

Elizabeth Sobell Her Book

A

S E R M O N

At the INTERMENT of

Mrs BARBARA AUSTEN.

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At the residence of

Mr. BARBARA AUSTIN

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The Wages of Sin, and the Gift of Life:

A

S E R M O N

Delivered at

PORTSMOUTH in *Hants*,

DECEMBER 12, 1764;

At the Interment of

Mrs BARBARA AUSTEN,

Wife of the

Rev. Mr DANIEL AUSTEN.

By JOHN STURCH.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by G. KEITH, in *Gracechurch-street*;

J. ROBINSON, in *Horsly-down*; and

W. LEPARD, in *Tooly-street*.

M DCC LXV.

[Price Sixpence.]



The Works of Sir John Lubbock

S E R M O N

Delivered at

Portsmouth in 1864

December 12, 1864

At the instigation of

Mrs BARBARA AUSTEN

Wife of the

Rev. M. DANIEL AUSTEN

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Printed and sold by G. K. & Co. in Great Britain

J. Robinson, in Fleet Street

W. Lister, in York Street

M D C C L X V

[Price 2s. 6d.]



To the Reverend Mr *AUSTEN*.

DEAR SIR,

IT was not in the least my intention to trouble the public with this, or any thing of mine of the like nature. The world is already stocked with unread and neglected Pamphlets, more especially Sermons.

I have yielded therefore to the desire of obliging, and not to any expectations which a stranger to me may suppose my partiality capable of entertaining. Your desire to have the following discourse published, as being delivered upon an occasion so affecting to yourself, was perhaps natural enough, and as such you will stand excused; and if the same candor be extended to me, on the score of your importunities, I shall have nothing further to wish, but that it may be in some degree useful and acceptable to the few families where friendship and particular connections may peradventure procure it admission. I am, with true respect and esteem, dear Sir,

Your Brother and humble Servant,

Newport, Isle of Wight,
December 29, 1764.

J. S.

To the Reverend Mr. AUSTIN.

Dear Sir,

I was not in the least my intention to turn
into the public with this, or any thing of mine
of the like nature. The world is already flooded
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to send and acceptable to the few families whose
friendship and protection I am sure may be
valued. I am, with great
respect and esteem, dear Sir,

Your Brother and humble Servant,

J. S.

Received of Mr. Austin
the sum of 10/-

ROMANS VI. 23.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

WHEN breaches are made in families, where *young* branches will long want the watchful care of a parent's eye, and the necessary aids of the cultivating hand; and where also the surviving parent must needs feel the weight of an additional tender solicitude; these are circumstances which undoubtedly call for our sympathizing and affectionate regards. Many of *us* have families which stand daily exposed to such affecting strokes of providence; and others who may not, are, I hope, far from without all concern for the afflictions of their brethren, or unmoved at those events by which the wants or anxieties of others are increased.

How applicable these general reflections are to the present sorrowful occasion, you need not be told. Yet after all, they are not

the *temporal*, but the still more interesting and universal consequences of mortality, which chiefly demand our attention; and should principally employ discourses of this nature.

The choice on the present occasion being referred to myself, I shall therefore beg a little of your attention to these important words of St *Paul*, which have just been read, and which open to us an extensive view of this subject, as it most *nearly* and *equally* concerns us all.

We may observe the apostle in this chapter, after his usual animated manner, representing *Sin* and *Righteousness* as the two opposite masters which share the services of the world between them; and the consequences are also pointed out, of our being respectively enlisted under them; the one, as they arise from the proper demerit and evil nature of the vassalage, the other, as derived partly from the natural excellence of the service itself, but more *especially* from the immense beneficence and grace of God, who hath called us unto righteousness and glory by his SON JESUS CHRIST.

Under

Under this view he speaks of the now christian *Romans*, as having once, in common with others, been the servants of sin, but as through the grace and power of the gospel, *happily* rescued from that bondage, and entered upon a nobler service. For the truth of this he fears not to put the decision upon their own experience, on a comparison ;
" What fruit, or advantage, had ye then, in
" the things whereof ye are now ashamed,
" and of which the end, after all, is death ?
" But now, being freed from the bondage of
" sin, as well as delivered from its penalties,
" ye have your fruit unto holiness, in which
" there are great and real advantages, and
" your end, as secured by divine promises,
" is everlasting life ; for (here we have the
" sum and source of both) the wages of sin
" is death, but the gift of GOD is eternal
" life, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord."

We are in nothing more indebted to the gospel, than for its clear discoveries and assurances of the *importance* of our present beings, as they stand connected with a *future world* of retribution. Nature may be awakened into anxiety on these heads, with very little

little ability to satisfy its own enquiries. The text, in particular, gives us two views of this matter, which are both of the utmost moment; the one indeed is dark and alarming, hung as it were in deep mourning; the other, through mercy, of a brighter and more encouraging aspect, especially to those who are impressed with an humble sense of the awful righteousness of the former.

Let the scene then now before us*, and yet more the authority of God in his word, engage our serious attention, whilst we briefly consider and improve them both, in the order wherein they are mentioned.

I. The *wages*, the natural desert and proper consequence of sin, is *death*.

This is a truth which revelation does not so properly *make*, as *declare* to be such. In the beginning of this epistle the apostle had been observing two principal grounds of his glorying in the universal importance of the gospel to mankind; the one, that "therein" "was revealed," or made more manifest than ever, the displeasure of God against "all the" "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;"
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* The Corps.

the other, more properly evangelical, was this, that herein was centered "the power of" GOD unto salvation, unto every one who "believed, whether Jew or Gentile." The former of these was needful to convince men of the evil and danger of holding the truth which GOD had shewed them, in unrighteousness of life; the latter led them to the certain means of that deliverance which they should now be convinced they stood in need of.

The effects of GOD's displeasure against sin in its various views, may be considered as all comprehensible in death; a word, which in its several applications in scripture, is not only opposed to sensibility in general, but to the sense of happiness in particular. Thus in every sense in which it is to be considered as the fruit and wages of sin, it is in itself, at least *negatively*, an enemy to the perfection and felicity of men.

If we look back, for instance, so far as to the first parents of mankind, we shall there see that the death by which our friends become lost to *us*, and, as to present enjoyments, to *themselves* also, was introduced as
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the wages of sin; for sin and mortality made entrance into the world together, the one as the effect and consequence of the other. So long as they maintained the innocence and uprightness in which they were made, and sought no inventions in opposition to the divine counsels, there wanted not provision for their undecayed strength and vigour, nor resources for their happiness, both internal and external. But no sooner were they ensnared into the service of sin, than mortality, and all its train of calamities, invaded them at once. The *tree of life* was no longer accessible, the *paradise*, where the bounty of heaven had so richly adorned the face of nature, and which GOD himself had deigned to visit, was no longer allowed to be their habitation or delight. They were exiled under visible tokens of disgrace (mixed indeed with mercy) into the wide world where the earth yieldeth her increase only to the sweating brow; and they were under a sentence of finishing their days of labour and sorrow, by a return to the dust from whence they were taken. Henceforth, such as were the root, such also were the branches; labouring, perishing creatures, frail as to their frame, confined as to their present state of existence,

existence, with their enjoyments uncertain at best, and certainly mixed with troubles. Thus, says the apostle, " by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and " *so* death passed upon all men."

Hitherto indeed, we have been speaking only of negative imperfections, or comparative disadvantages of being; from which, especially when temporal, we can have no pretence to any right of exemption. For were we as innocent of all other crime as of that of our first parents, yet a *being* upon the whole *enjoyable*, could not justly be complained of, because it was not *more* so; and much less can *guilty creatures* reasonably complain of it as a scanty inheritance. Yet so in fact it is, that innocence originally *was* exempt from these negatives, and they were, so far as appears, unknown to human nature, till human nature itself became corrupt and rebellious. Such was the liberality of providence, that man, the distinguished workmanship of God, had scarce any thing left to wish for till he unhappily revolted from his Maker and Benefactor; and such too was the *wisdom* of GOD, that though doubtless he *might* originally have been less bountiful,

bountiful, yet the withholding of his hand was so ordered and introduced, as to be a most instructive *lesson* to posterity, and a memorial of the nature of sin unto all generations.

But there are yet other senses of the word *death*, which, though more figurative, imply something not less destructive to human felicity, nor less properly the offspring and wages of sin. The nobler powers of our rational souls, whatever comparative disadvantages they may be placed under, as allied to these frail and mortal bodies, are yet undoubtedly given us for intellectual and moral improvements, and more especially for the knowledge, service and enjoyment of GOD. But as these are enslaved and perverted by corrupt interests and appetites, they are said in scripture to be *dead*; not thereby intending that these powers act not at all, but that they act in a *wrong* way, and to purposes degrading of their high original and true end. And it is evident that this kind of moral death (from which we must be quickened and born as it were again) is sometimes the *judicial*, and always the *natural* fruit and tendency of sin.

Of

Of the Gentiles * it is said, that when they liked not to retain GOD in their knowledge, *he gave them up* to vile affections, and stupidity of spiritual understanding; and of the Jews §, that when they hearkened not unto his voice, *he gave them also up* unto their own lusts, and to walk in their own counsels. And though we have no need to understand this, as spoken universally of either, yet is this evidently a deplorable kind of death, which sin naturally promotes and brings upon the soul.

For besides that hereby GOD is displeased and dishonoured, his sacred laws violated, his authority affronted, his counsels rejected, and his goodness abused; the most glorious and amiable part of his image, which we are capable of bearing, is also defaced; our intercourse with him is interrupted, and our hope in him obscured, our understandings are darkened and bewildered, and the perverseness of our affections strengthened; we hence, for the most part, rather *endure* life than *enjoy* it, and the prospect of death is full of discomfort; so that in short, by sin our whole souls tend to alienation from that
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* Rom. i. 26.

§ Psalm lxxxi. 12

which can alone exalt, improve, or render them happy. The apostle's words therefore are a just description of those who live under the service of sin, that they "walk after the vanity of their minds, having their understandings darkened, being estranged from the life of GOD, and having rendered themselves past feeling *," and so delivered themselves over to "work all uncleanness with greediness." How dreadful is this in itself, and how much more so when we consider how it prepares us for death in the most complete and wretched sense of all; a final separation from the presence of GOD, with such consciousness of his displeasure, as well as of our folly, as shall render us fit examples of the righteous and holy judgment of the Almighty! Thus in every view whatever, whether figurative or not, death, as the wages

* Though indeed, *past feeling*, implies that there once *was* feeling, yet it scarce expresses the just force of the apostle's *ἀπαλλοτριωσιν*, of which *καὶ αὐτοὺς* may as well be the object, as of the verb that follows — it however plainly signifies what men bring themselves to by their *own act* — *Passer's* remark upon the place (*Eph. iv. 13.*) is therefore a just one, that the apostle is speaking, "*Deus quorum animus ex consuetudine peccandi ita occaluit, &c. ut, at tempus, nullum sentiat conscientiæ remorsum, aut dolorem;*" of those who through custom in sinning have so hardened their hearts, that when they have done ill they feel it not.

wages of sin, is either *negatively*, or still more *directly*, an enemy to the *perfection* and *felicity* of man, and tends in the end to the utter destruction of both. — "Sin, when it is finished, says the Apostle *James*, bringeth forth death." — This is ever the nature of its service, and the wages it pays; nor is it conceivable how it should do otherwise, under the government of a righteous and holy G O D.

If it be asked, How then could the Apostle say, that death was his *gain*? the answer will be very easy, That the death of a good man is indeed his gain, as it is immediately *far better* to him than the purest of his enjoyments on earth; but it is presumed, that death is far from being gain, even to Christians, in another light; that is, when compared to that finishing and most glorious period, "when mortality shall be compleatly swallowed up of life." — Let us proceed now then,

Secondly, To the brighter and more cheerful branch of the text, and which throws light upon this otherwise very dark and uncomfortable scene. Though "the wages of

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fin

"be death," even in its most terrifying forms, yet is the *gift* of God *life*, yea *life eternal* thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord. The change of phrase here is both accurate and remarkable. When we are the servants of sin, it is "of sin unto death," as its proper wages and just desert; but when we are the servants of righteousness, it is "of obedience unto life," not as *wages*, but as a *gift* which proceeds from the free bounty and liberality of its source. And surely it is not possible for sinners, we might even say for the innocent, strictly and originally speaking, to receive so mighty a blessing in any other way. But we are more particularly to remark,

1. That the original source of this gift is God, even that God who hath been so justly offended, and *of whom*, as well as *to whom* are all things. It flows freely from the boundless treasures of his beneficence, and the good pleasure of his will, who has a right to *save* as well as to destroy. We can give no other account of it than of creation itself, or of any the like benefit; namely, that he is in his nature good and bountiful, and delighteth in beneficence and kindness.

Into

Into this only can we resolve it, as to the original cause and source, that we were either brought from nothing into life and existence; or that, when we have justly deserved to have that *being* an unhappy one, we are thus lifted out of this depth of distress. That we fall and become exposed to death and misery, is not owing to *him*, but to *ourselves*; that we fall, not without remedy and without hope, is not at all owing to ourselves, but to him. He is neither tempted of evil, nor tempteth he any man; but every good and perfect gift descendeth from him as from the father of light and perfection, and the father of mercies. He is long-suffering and gracious, not desirous that we should perish, as without mercy; but that in the day of his gracious visitation we may escape an evil justly deserved; but neither the way provided for our escape, nor any mercies relating to it, are extorted from him; but his nature is kind and good, his providences free and generous, and therefore are we prevented by his loving-kindness and compassionate mercy.

2. We are to observe also, the *medium* or *method* by which this inestimable gift is de-

rived to mankind. It is "the gift of God" through JESUS CHRIST our Lord."

It did not answer the Apostle's design, we see, to say barely that life is God's gift to such especially as have deserved the wages of sin, (though that is most certainly true) but it is a gift conferred through the mediation of his Son JESUS CHRIST. Being made perfect in this character through sufferings, "he is become the *author* of eternal salvation" unto all them that obey him." All things are of God, who reconcileth us unto himself; but then, it is *by*, or *through* JESUS CHRIST. — And once again, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory."—Here the Apostle might have stopped, certainly, with great truth and good sense, but he adds—"through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*" And this being so eminent a part of the gospel, running as it does, so uniformly through the New Testament, one would think it should from

* The ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 57. Rom. v. 31, &c. is so plainly equivalent and parallel to the ΕΝ ΚΡΙΣΤΩ ΙΗΣΟΥ, &c. in the text, that we may justly argue from *either* as of the same force.

thence

thence follow, not only that these triumphs over sin and death are the gifts of God, (for such even reason itself must admit them to be) but that the manner also in which they are given, through the mediation of our Lord, was of such high importance, that the *honour* and *consistence* of the divine government were interested therein, and secured thereby; and consequently, that our Saviour's condescension and love therein manifested, is with the highest reason to be considered as the matter of our joy and gratitude: It may not indeed be easy for us to obtain such clear views of the expediency or importance of this wonderful mean to so great an end, as curiosity might excite us to wish. But when we are told in general, that God hath set forth him to be a propitiation—"that he might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him that believeth"—that in bringing 'many sons unto glory, it became *Him*, for, and by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings; and that the grace of God, through him who thus suffered for us, aboundeth towards us in all wisdom and prudence; these seem to be premises from whence one may draw such conclusions, and

the conclusion evidently tends to engage us in *gratitude* as well as *interest* to adhere to him and rejoice in him, as the way, the truth, and the life.

May we not add then, that such sentiments and views of our Lord's mediation, are in great measure the spirit and support of his kingdom in the world. Believing that in him God freely giveth and most fitly dispenseth pardon and reconciliation to the penitent and humble, we are encouraged to approach his throne and to have access to his infinite Majesty in the spirit of grateful confidence, and rejoicing in CHRIST JESUS as the friend and exalted advocate of returning offenders, who for their sakes hath glorified God in the obedience of his life and in the sacrifice of his death. Under the influence of the same sentiments also, our hearts will be strengthened and enlarged to serve and honour him, in all his institutions and commandments, expecting and desiring his blessing, as the head of spiritual influence as well as of authority in the church of God. And let me add too, we shall understand the tendency of these principles very ill indeed, if they enlarge not our hearts in
thank-

thankfulness to G O D, and *benevolence* to men.

A few words remain to be said, *thirdly*, of the immense *greatness* of this gift of G O D; it is of nothing less, than " *eternal life* " through JESUS CHRIST our Lord."

Were there more time we could however speak but very imperfectly of *the nature* of it, because no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, of the things which G O D hath prepared for them that love him. Suffice it to observe at present, that it is, in all respects whatever, a glorious *reverse* of that death which is in any view the wages of sin; and illustriously represents the G O D whom we are to serve, in the most amiable of all views, that of a *benefactor* to his otherwise helpless and miserable creation. Indeed, we have not that *earthly paradise* to dwell in, which once smiled upon its innocent inhabitants; yet is the earth still full of the Creator's bounty, and the heavens still shew forth his glory; and we are assured, that there remain in the stores of the same munificence, a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwell eternal righteousness, dignity

and honour. This is, in a still more heavenly and exalted meaning, "the paradise of *GOD*," and which innocence itself could never have obtained a natural right to.

We must also pass through the valley of the shadow of a natural death; for all nature says to us, as was said to *Hezekiah*, "set thy house in order, for thou shalt *die*," and not live." But we are assured by One who hath given proof of it in himself, that "he is the resurrection and the life;" and that believing in him, though we die, yet shall we live again, and *live* to infinite advantage. And as to spiritual or figurative death, this is already a conquered enemy, though not so completely as hereafter it shall be, wherever the *light of the world* shines as our guide, and *CHRIST* has a faithful and affectionate, a willing, and obedient people. And we are abundantly assured also, that over these the *second death* shall have no power; for the same Spirit of holiness by which our *LORD* himself was raised up, shall also raise up them to live and reign together with him.

How

How transcendently grand and wonderful is this scheme of redeeming mercy, which by an awfully glorious mixture of the characters of *sovereign Judge* and *almighty Benefactor*, at once humbles and exalts us ; I mean, depresses our vanity, yet excites our gratitude, and enlivens our hopes?

It is easy to see then, what are the proper inferences and improvements from hence, and what are more especially proper to such an occasion as this. As,

1. It affords great consolation concerning the *departure* of those, of whom we have good reason to believe, that they lived under the practical influence of these great truths. The end of revealing this grace was not only to display the wisdom, power and goodness of God, but to redeem us through CHRIST unto himself, that we might not be the servants of sin unto death, but of righteousness unto life, as his own gift, and in his own way. As this is a way full of purity and truth, it is also full of grace, and inspires the most liberal sentiments of love and grati-

gratitude. It discourages nothing but hypocrisy, impenitence, pride and unfaithfulness, which are inconsistent with *real* service. All who have their fruit unto holiness, have their end everlasting life, through our Lord, because such is the promise, will, and gift of God. We well hope this was the happy case and character of our deceased Friend and Sister in the common faith of our Lord; but it will be more to *our* purpose to observe with regard to ourselves, that,

2. The subject we have been considering, is very alarming to the thoughtless and secure, who are easy through meer inattention to the reality and importance of a future world.

We are none of us so weak as to question the certainty of our change, or the uncertainty of the time; but do we well consider, that the peculiar awfulness of it is, that it is *final*, and will fix our state and character for ever. Mortality, and all its leading prefaces, have, in the view before-mentioned, the voice of a solemn *warning*, to take heed,
left

lest a worse thing come upon us, and in which, let me add, no one's sin, but our own can involve us.

We are generally pretty careful to ward off the stroke of the first death, and to call in the aid of the best remedies that we know of, by which oppressed nature may be assisted and relieved. We do this, though we know the success is precarious, and the benefit, at best, but a short suspension of the inevitable day. Why then, yea, why not infinitely *rather* careful, to get the second death *reversed*, to which our own offences only have exposed us! Why not consult *him*, who hath the power of life and of death in his hand, who ever speaketh wholesome and healing words, and whom the Father hath given that we might not perish! Why so much our own enemies in one case rather than the other? Though the truth is, we are careless enough in both, and seldom act so reasonably as we should do, till we are driven to it by immediate danger. Nothing however can equal the folly of risking our all, and leaving the care of an eternal world, upon a few of the
last

last hours of uncertain life.—Let it then be even now considered,

3. What good reason we have to hope that the life is already begun which we are thus assured shall flourish in immortality. If it has no beginning here, it will have no existence, much less improvements, in the the other world. It is a plant of celestial growth and original, which takes root in the hidden man of the heart, where faith, hope and love, open the understanding, subdue the will, and exalt the affections for the service of G O D. But, like other trees, it is known, at least to us, by its fruits : Wherever these principles live, they will engage us in the service of righteousness and of the kingdom of G O D, not only because the contrary terminates in death, (though *that* is a weighty consideration) but because the service we are called to is recommended by such condescending love, and is so just and reasonable in itself.

As we rise in the happy influence of these more generous principles, the gospel will operate in a way most honourable to G O D,
and

and most agreeable and beneficial to ourselves; or, in the Apostle's language, we shall possess the spirit of *sons* and not of *slaves*, the spirit of *freedom* and *confidence*, yet of *righteousness*, *goodness* and *truth*: and *he that in these things now serveth Christ, is both accepted of God, and approved of* reasonable and good *men*; but however accident and misapprehension may operate to prevent the latter, he will enjoy the present supporting prospects, and the never-ending future blessings, of that gift which is of **GOD** through **JESUS CHRIST** our Lord.

FUNERAL

FUNERAL HYMN,

By *THEODOSIA.*

I.

WHile to the grave our Friends are borne,
 Around their cold remains,
 How all the tender passions mourn,
 And each fond heart complains!

II.

But down to earth, alas! in vain
 We bend our weeping eyes;
 Ah! let us leave these seats of pain,
 And upward learn to rise.

III.

Hope cheerful smiles amid the gloom,
 And beams a healing ray;
 And guides us from the darksome tomb,
 To realms of endless day.

IV. JESUS

IV.

JESUS, who left his blest abode
 (Amazing grace!) to die,
 Mark'd when he rose the shining road
 To his bright courts on High.

V.

To those bright courts when hope ascends
 The tears forget to flow ;
 Hope views our absent happy friends,
 And calms the swelling woe.

VI.

Then let our hearts repine no more
 That earthly comfort dies ;
 But lasting happiness explore,
 And ask it from the skies.

F I N I S.

(Singing, Grace) to the
 Now, when he rose the thing said
 To his right hand of the

To that right hand where he stood
 The true light to show
 And when the feeling came
 And when the feeling came

Then let our hearts rejoice
 For every common day
 But let us not forget
 And let us not forget

